Gandhiji and Cow-Slaughter

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HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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A MISCHIEVOUS MOVE

I give below the gist of an article by Baba Raghavdas of U.P. in the Hindi *Amrita Patrika* of Allahabad, dated 29-7-1951 :

> "The late Sardar Patel by his restoration of the famous, historic and sacred temple of Somnath made it clear that ancient places of worship would surely be renovated in free India. Again, when on the inauguration of our freedom, Babuji got back for the Muslims those mosques which the Hindus had usurped, he thereby assured us that those temples which had been polluted in the Muslim period or taken possession of by the Muslims, would also be renovated.....
>
> "....With Kashi, Ayodhya and Mathura (all three in U. P.) is deeply associated the life of the Indian people. Rama, Krishna and Vishwanath are the most beloved ones of India. Their renovation, therefore, has a significance of its own....
>
> "It is not a communal question, but that of the conqueror and the conquered. If the Union Jack can be replaced by the Tricolour, the Viceroy by the President, then these glorious holy spots can also be renovated. And if a temple of Somnath, destroyed a thousand years ago, can be renovated under the patronage of the Government of India, then why should there be any hitch in the renovation of these three places in U. P. ?
>
> "Even as we are glad to see Somnath renovated we are as much pained to see these great spots lying uncared for....
>
> "Elections are in the offing. We have to assure our millions of men and women of justice. And I am quite confident that the spectacle of these three great historical places having been restored to their previous glory and honour will generate in the people a greater faith in justice...."

Baba Raghavdas has not made it explicit what he wants to get done at Kashi, Ayodhya or Mathura. Which are the temples that he wants to be renovated? Does he hint that the great mosque at Kashi built by Aurangazeb, or the one at Hanumangarhi in Ayodhya, or a like one in Mathura should be reconverted into temples as has been attempted to be done at Ayodhya?

The reference to Gandhiji and Sardar is absolutely incorrect. Somnath was a dilapidated temple in the possession of Hindus. No mosque had been built there, and no possession of the site was claimed by any Muslim over it. A body of influential Hindus desired to rebuild it and they were entitled to do it. Of the influential Hindus a few, like Sardar, were also members of one or the other State or Central Governments of India. It naturally created misunderstandings, partly because the move followed closely on the accession of Junagadh to the Indian Union, and partly on account of the past communal associations of Somnath. One might hold that it would have been better if the Hindu leaders in Government had not involved themselves in this movement. But it cannot be said that they were not within their rights. What Gandhiji did was to take care to see that the renovation was not done at Government expense. His reference to this matter on 28th Nov. '47 is reported more fully in *Harijan Sevak* of 7th Dec. '47 than in *Harijan* of the same date. As it throws light on the attitude of not only Gandhiji but also of Sardar towards this project, I give below a translation from *Harijan Sevak* :

> "A friend writes that Government funds should not be spent for the renovation of the Somnath temple. I am given to understand that fifty thousand rupees have been promised by Samaldas Gandhi, who has formed the Provincial Government (of Junagadh), out of the funds collected by him from the people for his movement, and one *lakh* have been promised by the Jam Saheb. Sardar Patel told me, 'Sardar is not a man to spend money from Government treasury for a thing which pertains to Hindus alone. We are all Indians, but religion is our personal affair. We shall gladly accept moneys from Hindus for the renovation of Somnath, and shall do what is possible within that amount. If we don't get sufficient funds, the work will not proceed.' I (Gandhiji) was glad to hear this."

I have not seen anything that shows that Gandhiji took any personal interest in the project. In fact, he had no heart for it. He was, as every one knows, engaged in a "do or die" attempt for establishing communal concord, and would not do anything which might create the least misunderstanding.

Baba Raghavdas is a renowned constructive worker, a prominent member of the U. P. Legislative Assembly, and of the executive council of the Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee. He is also a great demagogue and the head of a religious *math*. Consequently, he commands a powerful influence with the authorities, and still greater with the credulous masses. He took part

in creating trouble about the Babri Masjid matter at Ayodhya. This is a more mischievous and extensive move than the above. He compares his suggestion to that of Gandhiji asking the Hindus of Delhi to return the mosques to the Muslims in 1947-48. Babaji knows perfectly well that it was a matter of an altogether different nature. It was not the raking of an old feud. It was a thing which had been wantonly and violently perpetrated in the present, almost before his eyes, by the very persons who were asked to return them. It was not restarting a quarrel more than 200 years old.

I am sorry to write about Baba Raghavdas so severely, for I had always entertained a high personal regard for him. But, I must regretfully charge him of being grossly communally minded. And he is not the only Congressman who propagates communal poison among the credulous masses. There are several such, particularly in U.P. One of them has gone to the length of fabricating a letter and an article in the name of Shri Mahadev Desai and Gandhiji respectively. If the Congress is, as it claims to be, not a Hindu communal organization, I am unable to understand how such people find place in it. Does it realize that this is a grave matter, which might involve the nation again in a communal blood bath? The Congress claims to be the only political party capable of 'delivering the goods'. What are the goods which it will deliver?

I am not an enemy of the Congress. Even without regular membership in it, I have served it in all its major movements for the liberation of the country. But I cannot, must not, side with it if it swerves away from the right path.

Wardha, 11-8-'51 K. G. MASHRUWALA

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MATHURADAS' LAST WISH

(*By Dr Jivraj Mehta*)

[In the obituary notice of Shri Mathuradas Trikamji in *Harijan*, 21-7-'51, a mention was made of his having bequeathed his body to the medical science for research. In the course of an article on the deceased, Dr Jivraj Mehta refers to this subject as follows:]

The severity of his last illness was such that an ordinary man would have succumbed to it, within two or three years. But his determination, self-control and understanding of the nature of his illness enabled him to get the better of it to a considerable extent. He realized the debt he owed to medical science; and in his usual inimitable way he decided to pay his tribute to the science and art of healing. Realizing that he was losing grip over his health, he addressed a letter to Dr Gilder and me on the 17th June, 1951, which we feel we should share with the public. In that letter he writes: "It was due to Bapu that we came in contact, and our contact developed into lasting friendship. You bestowed devoted care and attention on me during many long periods of my ill-health which served by itself a tonic to me." He continues by saying, "Medical service and medical fraternity has done abundance for me. I therefore explicitly express my desire that when I close my life, dissection may be performed, lungs, heart etc. may be examined, and presented for study and demonstration, if at all possible, preferably at the G.S. Medical College and K.E.M. Hospital. I hope you will not hesitate to give effect to this last request to you." It was to the progress in medical science, he observed, that he owed so much for the prolongation of his life; and he felt that he should render service to science and to humanity in return to the best of his ability. He therefore voluntarily surrendered his body for a post-mortem examination, which Dr Dhaygude, Dean, K. E. M. Hospital and Sheth G. S. Medical College and his colleagues, kindly carried out, and as a result gave us valuable information as to how he successfully fought his illness for ten long years. This decision of his indicates the spirit and the strength of conviction which formed a prominent part of Mathuradas' public life.

For enabling such noble self-sacrifice to be carried out, Dr Gilder and I would like to express in the name of our profession our sincere gratitude to the members of Mathuradas' family who willingly and readily gave assent to the carrying out of his last wish. It is such examination and study which Mathuradas desired to be done of his body that has made the medical science so progressive in foreign countries; and let us hope that the noble example set by him and the members of his family will be understood in the right spirit. It is such sacrifice that invokes the spirit of progress in a nation and ennobles it. He has taught us a lesson which many of us may rightly follow in the interest of medical science and that of humanity in general.

'SHRI' OR 'SRI'?

A correspondent draws attention to the spelling of श्री in Roman characters variously as *Sri, Sree, Shri, Shree.* After going deep into the matter and referring to Sanskrit-English scholars, he has come to the conclusion that *Sri* should be preferred to all other spellings and be unanimously adopted.

I have always advocated that there should be a uniform system of transliterating Indian words in Roman characters. In most of the European languages short and long vowels are often spelt alike, and even where the long vowels are distinguished, there is no uniform method about it. Thus *a, i, u* may be both short and long, and long *i* might also be indicated by *ee, ie, y* etc., and long *u* by *oo, ou* etc. Hence has arisen non-uniformity in transliteration of Indian words also.

A similar difficulty arises in respect of consonants. Thus, in non-scholarly writings, in North India (including Maharashtra) श and ष are both indicated by *sh*, स by *s*, ट and त by *t*, ड and द by *d*, ठ and थ by *th*, and ढ and ध by *dh*. In South India, on the other hand, *s* stands both for श and स, and *sh* for ष. Also, *t* and *d* stand for ट and ड and *th* and *dh* for त and द respectively. There is no exact way of indicating ठ and थ, or ढ and ध. The differences have arisen from the absence of certain sounds in the various languages. Thus people in the North pronounce श almost as ष or rather as ش or *sh* in cash. Hence श has come to be transliterated by *sh* in North India and by simply *s* in South India. If an exact transliteration has to be made श must have its own distinguishing mark, as indicated in dictionaries. But as it is not usual to show diacritical marks in popular writings, this poor letter has to oscillate between *s* and *sh* according to provincial usage. श after all is a less troublesome consonant. But a greater mutilation of pronunciations is caused by the confusion created by *t – th*, and *d – dh*. Thus the ignorant Northerner pronounces Mutthuswami as मुथ्थुस्वामी or मुठ्ठुस्वामी instead of मुत्तुस्वामी, Thambi as थंबी or ठंबी instead of तंबी, and Santhanam as संथानम् instead of सन्तानम्. In the same way the ignorant Southerner will pronounce Thakurdas as ताकुरदास, Dhrangadhra as द्रांगद्रा. Still further confusion arises on account of several consonants like क–ग, च–ज, ट–ठ, त–द, प–ब, being not well distinguished in Tamil, so that गुरुपादम् might appear in South Indian transliteration as Gurupatham and might be rendered by North Indians into गुरुबाथम् and Kasturbhai might be pronounced in South India as कष्टुरबाओ. Unless the Government of India standardizes a uniform system, this confusion is unavoidable. Till then, I have to follow for *Harijan* the system current in the North, as this is published from Gujarat; that is, treat श and ष alike and render it by *sh*. It is after all a matter of convention.

Wardha, 11-8-'51 K. G. MASHRUWALA

"DESTROY MORE FOOD" CAMPAIGN!

All honest students of nutrition will admit that grain which goes into a biscuit and confectionary factory comes out in a damaged and expensive form. It is no longer healthy solid food for the masses, but has become unhealthy fancy dietary for the upper and middle classes. These are plain facts which nobody who goes into the question can deny. Very well — now read this advertisement:

> "The largest and most modern biscuit factory in the East swings into production. A great step forward in India's industrial progress. Maximum capacity of any factory in the East. 30 tons biscuits and 60 tons confectionary per day. A great enterprise!" (*Hindustan Times*, July the 18th, 1951.)

Thirty tons biscuits and sixty tons confectionary per day! How much grain and sugar does that mean? And this for only one of many such factories.

I should be most grateful to readers who are in a position to find out, if they would let me know what is the yearly consumption of grain and sugar by the total number of biscuit, confectionary, and breakfast-cereal factories in India.

It should be clearly realized that these products are not eaten by hungry people at meal times, but are taken as light refreshment and dainties in between meals, thus taking basic food from the hungry and serving it dressed up to the fastidious.

I do not blame any particular manufacturer. These friends have been brought up from their childhood to think in terms of amassing wealth, and they are not usually in touch with the kind of people who could show them that they are playing havoc with the health of the nation. It is, therefore, quite natural for them to think that processed-food factories are a nice way of making pots of money and serving the public at the same time. But I do blame the Government which encourages such enterprises, and even sends its Ministers to grace their opening ceremonies. There are two expressions which the Government is always using: "Gandhian Ideals" and "War-time Basis". Neither of these principles admits of the using of food grains and sugar in the manufacture of fancy processed foods.

That there is no "Gandhian Ideology" in the Government "Grow More Food Campaign" needs no argument; it is self-evident. That there is also no serious "War-time Basis" is, I think, equally clear. The above example is a glaring proof.

Pilkhi, 24-7-'51 MIRA

HARIJAN

August 25 1951

GANDHIJI AND COW-SLAUGHTER

At the Bangalore session of the A. I. C. C. (July 14, '51) Shri Jawaharlal Nehru is reported to have said :

> "Much has been said about cow-slaughter and Gandhiji's name had been invoked in that respect. Gandhiji was, however, against legislative stoppage of cow-slaughter."

The practice of invoking Gandhiji's name is resorted to by every one, whenever it suits one's purpose. It can be natural and proper on certain occasions. The reprehensible feature of the habit is that his name is often inaccurately invoked. And I regret that in this case Shri Jawaharlal Nehru's refutation is even more inaccurate than his invocation by the other party.

I have tried to hunt out Gandhiji's reference to prohibition of cow-slaughter by legislation. I find that the point was expressly discussed by him in *Young India* (7-7-'27) in his article, "The Cow in Mysore". Several Cow Protection Societies of Mysore had suspected Gandhiji of being "totally against legal prohibition of cow-slaughter under any circumstances whatever", and sent to him letters of protest. The misunderstanding had arisen out of extracts published from Gandhiji's reply to a questionnaire of the Mysore Cow Protection Committee then appointed by that State. Hence Gandhiji published his full letter for clarifying his position. The article is also important for various constructive suggestions to make cow-slaughter economically impossible, and the sponsors of the Gosamwardhan Bill now pending before the *Sansad* (Parliament) will do well to study the article carefully. For the convenience of the reader it is reproduced in another column.

The following are further extracts showing Gandhiji's attitude towards cow-slaughter :

> "The philosophy of cow-protection, therefore, is, in my opinion, sublime. It immediately puts the animal creation on the same level with man so far as the right to live is concerned. But it is no part of Hinduism to prevent by force cow-slaughter by those who do not believe in cow-protection." (*Young India*, 11-11-'26; *Hindu Dharma*,* p. 304).

> "Though I regard cow-protection as the central fact of Hinduism — central because it is common to classes as well as masses — I have never been able to understand the antipathy towards the Mussalmans on that score. We say nothing about the slaughter that daily takes place on behalf of Englishmen. Our anger becomes red hot when a Mussalman slaughters a cow. All the riots that have taken place in the name of the cow have been an insane waste of effort. They have not saved a single cow, but they have on the contrary stiffend the backs of the Mussalmans and resulted in more slaughter. The Hindus commit no sin, if they cannot prevent cow-slaughter at the hands of the Mussalmans, and they do sin grievously when in order to save the cow they quarrel with the Mussalmans. (*Young India*, 29-5-'24)

> "I know what would spare the Hindus' feeling in the matter of the cow. It is nothing short of complete *voluntary* stoppage of cow-slaughter by the Mussalmans, whether for sacrifice or for food. The Hindu *Dharma* will not be satisfied if some tyrant secured by force of arms immunity of the cow from the slaughter." (*Hindu Dharma*, pp. 306-307).

It will be seen from the article and the above extracts that what Gandhiji was opposed to was the prohibition of "cow-slaughter for purposes considered to be *religious*, by any of its subjects, without the consent of the *intelligent* majority of such subjects." (Italics ours). The present demand is for the total prevention of cow-slaughter. Under the British regime, the desire and the sentiment for this were undoubtedly there, but being a subdued nation, the people had not the necessary courage to make the demand, and like all weak people, they made their co-subjects, the Muslims, the scapegoat for giving vent to their feelings against cow-slaughter. Gandhiji, the Satyagrahi that he was, could not agree to such cowardly and weak manifestation of the protest. I have no doubt that he wanted cow-slaughter to be stopped absolutely ; but in case it was held by Muslims that the offering of the cow on certain occasions was obligatory according to Muslim rites, he would have conceded to them that right even in a Hindu State. But I cannot imagine him saying that he would not make a law to stop cow-slaughter because the slaughtered cow gave a better meat or hide than a cow dying naturally.

I understand that it is now accepted on all hands that the offering of a cow is not a religious obligation in Islam. All that the Muslims say is that the offering is not prohibited in Islam as it is in Hinduism. And I believe that most Muslims have been themselves voluntarily giving up cow-slaughter on festive occasions. The subject has thus changed its form altogether, and Gandhiji's name need not be wrongly invoked either in favour of the movement, or against it. His opinions can certainly be quoted and should be considered as respectfully as those of any great leader, philosopher or authority on a particular subject. But it is high time that in all public matters, we learn to take decisions in accordance with our own sentiments and lights, and muster courage even to differ from him, if we must. That would be more Gandhian than quoting or misquoting Gandhiji for putting a seal on the lips of the opponent.

Wardha, 31-7-'51 K. G. MASHRUWALA

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COW IN INDIA

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THE COW IN MYSORE

(By M. K. Gandhi)

I have received letters from Cow Protection Societies in Mysore, protesting against my letter to the Mysore Cow Protection Committee appointed by the State. My letter was in answer to a questionnaire issued by that Committee. Extracts from that letter published in the Madras Press led the Cow Protection Societies in question to think that I was totally against legal prohibition of cow-slaughter under any circumstances whatsoever. I was surprised to receive these letters, and I wondered whether, in a moment of forgetfulness or inadvertence, I had ever said that there should never be any legislation against cow-slaughter. I therefore asked for a copy of my letter from the Cow Protection Committee, which they have kindly sent me. As the letter represents my considered opinion, and as it has been given some importance by the Committee and has caused misunderstanding among the public of Mysore interested in this very important question, I reproduce the whole of it below:

(The letter begins with an apology for the long delay caused in replying to the questionnaire. — Ed.)

"In matters of religion I am against any State interference, and the cow question is in India a mixed matter of religion and economy. So far as economy is concerned, I have no doubt that it is the concern of every State, whether Hindu or Mussalman, to conserve the cattle supply. But, if I have understood your questionnaire rightly, the underlying note is whether the State would be justified in interposing itself between Hindus and Mussalmans and regulate cow-slaughter even for purposes which Mussalmans considered to be religious. In India which I consider to be as much the land of Hindus born in it as of Mussalmans, Christians and others born in it, even a Hindu State may not prohibit cow-slaughter for purposes considered to be religious by any of its subjects, without the consent of the intelligent majority of such subjects, so long as such slaughter is conducted in private and without any intention of provoking or giving offence to Hindus. That the very knowledge of any such slaughter would give offence to Hindus is inevitable. But unfortunately we know, that in India cow-slaughter is often resorted to to defy and wound Hindu sentiment. This should be put down by every State that has the slightest regard for its subjects. But in my opinion the economic side of the cow question, if it is properly handled, automatically provides for the delicate religious side. Cow-slaughter should be and can be made economically impossible, whereas unfortunately of all the places in the world it is the sacred animal of the Hindus which has become the cheapest for slaughter. To this end I suggest the following:

1. The State should in the open market buy out every cattle offered for sale by out-bidding every other buyer.
2. The State should run dairies in all principal towns ensuring a cheap supply of milk.
3. The State should run tanneries where the hides, bones, etc., of all dead cattle in its possession should be utilized, and should offer to buy again in the open market all private-owned dead cattle.
4. The State should keep model cattle-farms, and instruct the people in the art of breeding and keeping cattle.
5. The State should make liberal provision for pasture land and import the best experts in the world for imparting a knowledge of the science of cattle to the people.
6. There should be a separate department created for the purpose, and no profit should be made in the department, so that the people may receive the full benefit of every improvement, that might be made in the different breeds of cattle, and other matters pertaining to them.

"The foregoing scheme presupposes the State up-keep of all old, maimed and diseased cattle. This no doubt constitutes a heavy burden, but it is a burden which all States, but above all a Hindu State, should gladly bear. My own study of the question leads me to think, that the running of scientific dairies and tanneries would enable the State to cover the expenses of the upkeep of cattle, that have become economically useless, apart from the manure they yield, and to sell at market rates leather, leather goods, milk and milk products, besides manure and many other things that can be manufactured from dead cattle, and which today, owing to want of scientific knowledge or false sentiment, are practically going to waste, or from which the greatest advantage is not received. If you desire any further information on the scheme submitted, by way of elaboration of any parts of it, you will please let me know."

Neither the discussion with the members of the several Cow Protection Societies, nor the correspondence before me warrants any alteration of the opinion expressed in this letter. The reader will observe that I have nowhere said, that there should never be any legislation against cow-slaughter. But what I have said is, that there should be no prohibition of cow-slaughter by legislation *without the consent of the intelligent majority of the subjects* adversely affected by it. Therefore, the Mysore State will be perfectly justified, and, indeed, bound to undertake legislation prohibiting cow-slaughter, if it has the consent of the intelligent majority of its Mussalman population. The members of the Cow Protection Societies that met me assured me, that the relations between Hindus

and Mussalmans in Mysore were cordial, and that a majority of Mussalmans in Mysore were as much in favour of legislative prohibition as Hindus, and I was glad to be assured by them, that many Europeans, especially missionaries were in favour of such prohibition. So far, therefore, as the question of legislation in Mysore is concerned, if the statements made to me are correct, the way is clear for legislative prohibition. But let me reiterate what I have pointed out in my letter, and what I have emphasized so often in these columns, namely, that legislative prohibition is the smallest part of any programme of cow-protection. The trend of the letters received by me, and the activity of most Cow Protection Societies, however, show, that they would be satisfied with mere legal prohibition. I wish to warn all such societies against staking their all on legislation. We have already too much of it in this law-ridden country. People seem to think, that when a law is passed against any evil, it will die without any further effort. There never was a grosser self-deception. Legislation is intended and is effective against an ignorant or a small evil-minded minority; but no legislation which is opposed by an intelligent and organized public opinion, or under cover of religion by a fanatical minority, can ever succeed. The more I study the question of cow-protection, the stronger the conviction grows upon me, that protection of the cow and her progeny can be attained, only if there is continuous and sustained constructive effort along the lines suggested by me. There may be, probably there is, room for supplementing or amending the constructive programme sketched by me. But there is no room for doubting the absolute necessity of a vast constructive programme, if India's cattle are to be saved from destruction. And the preservation of cattle really means also a step towards the preservation of the starving millions of India's men and women, who have also been reduced to the condition of her cattle.

(Here Gandhiji refers to the duties of Hindu princes in general and the particularly favourable conditions of the Mysore State as it was in 1927 for *go-seva.* —Ed.)

Unless the States and the people co-operate with one another to control and regulate the breeding of cattle, the production of milk supply, and the disposal of dead cattle, for the benefit of the people as a whole, the cattle of India will be bred but to die an unnatural death at the hands of the butcher, notwithstanding all the legislation that may be passed against cow-slaughter. The ignorance of Nature's Law will be accepted as no excuse when men and women of India appear before the Throne of Judgment.

I was shocked to learn from the members of the Cow Protection Society, that beef slaughtered in Bangalore and in Mysore was given to the animals in the State gardens, that beef was much cheaper than any other meat, and that the Adi Karnatakas, who claimed to be and were recognized as Hindus, and who knew the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* as well as any other Hindu, were addicted to beef-eating. If all this is true, the better-placed Hindus are clearly to blame for such a state of things. If the Adi Karnatakas do not respect the sanctity of the cow, it is because they know no better. But what is to be said of the Hindus, who have so criminally neglected their brethren as to omit to acquaint them with a fundamental truth of Hinduism?

SHRI VINOBA AT SHIVARAMPALLI

XI

April 12, '51 — With merchants.

"The world is sustained by truth. It subsists because there is more truth in the world than untruth. If untruth became greater than truth, the world would come to an end."

Vinoba was addressing about a hundred merchants who had come to understand the *Sarvodaya* point of view and how it could be applied in daily life, when according to them it had become very difficult to conduct business without resorting to falsehood. After they were introduced to Vinobaji by Shri Tokarsey, Secretary of their Association, Vinoba commenced with the words quoted above. Continuing he said:

"I believe that a majority of people are never wicked. Under God's dispensation, a majority of men keeps to the right. Merchants have been very much criticized of late. Their reputation has gone low. But I am not prepared to accept that the people in general have lost character. No doubt, the general atmosphere has become unhealthy and it is responsible for the present conditions. In a society a few people remain unaffected in any atmosphere whatever and maintain their righteousness undamaged. They are supra-normal. On the other hand, a few are bad even in good surroundings; they are sub-normal. The rest — and they form a majority — react to the good or bad atmosphere. They obey the laws and the strong currents round about. Right customs — righteous men; wrong customs — wrong men. Hence it is necessary to maintain the right atmosphere to maintain the morale of the people. India is passing at present through an unhealthy atmosphere. It has enveloped every class — the *kisans*, the public servants, the merchants and the *gumastas* (clerks). When the atmosphere improves these people will regain their moral strength. They are as if caught in an epidemic of moral disease, as they might be in one of cholera or plague. It will subside as soon as there is improvement in the atmosphere.

"There is lack of co-operation between the people and their Government. The Governments are inexperienced, and lack the knowledge which experience gives. The public servants follow the same old method. They are the same old men, and have since grown more indolent. The mercantile community, instead of entering into a contest with the foreigners, is snatching away the occupations of the villagers. One owns a cloth-mill, another, an oil-mill, a third, a sugar-mill. Thus they rob the villagers of their industries. Unable to face the foreigners, their talent and energy are directed towards exploiting their own poor. They claim that they raise the sugar-mill because the people need sugar. But it eliminates the *gur* industry. They say that they manufacture *vanaspati* because *ghee* is not available in sufficient quantity. They argue that although it is a little dearer than oil it is a good substitute for *ghee*. But thereby they harm both cattle and agriculture. Even as regards cloth they proffer the same argument. And they claim to put up flour-mills to liberate women from slavery to the *chakki*. They argue that women are already overburdened with work and the flour-mill is a piece of service to the wife and

the mother. But merchants should ponder over the fact that by their taking away the industries and occupations of the villagers the latter have been deprived of their means of livelihood.

"Every one needs food; few die of starvation as such. It is not their food which is burdensome, but the fact that they eat food without doing any work, creates the burden. If cities absorb the village industries, these *charkhas* and handlooms will leave villages and go to the cities. The cities will be responsible for the maintenance of the villagers, and none can say what will happen if the village population gets desperate and takes to violence. I said during my tour and repeat it here that the cities are already invaded by foreign industrialists, and villagers might also start invading them from the other side. As a result the merchants and the city people might get sandwiched between the two. The mercantile community should therefore put forth a new type of enterprise, and should plan industries on new lines.

"Merchants think that their function is merely to send out and bring in goods. When we speak to them about production, they point to the manufacture of sugar. *Go-seva* (cow-husbandry) is one of the duties of the mercantile community. But they do not take to occupations which mainly belong to them. They have forsaken the functions of the *vaishya*. That is why they have lost their reputation. Why is it that the soldier is honoured? Because he lays down his life for his country at a period of crisis. The traders, instead of protecting the country's interests at a difficult period, are keen on advancing their own interests. Why was it that the Jews, inspite of their efficiency and skill in trade and commerce, did not command respect? Because they diverted their talents and energies towards amassing wealth only. They had nothing before them for which they could make sacrifices, even give their lives. So, they have fallen. Muslims did possess some object in life; but it could not manifest itself in the lives of Indian Muslims. Merchants should, therefore, understand their duty and should expend all their energy in creating a good healthy atmosphere in the country. They should give up selfishness and organize the trades and industries for the good of the country.

"There was a time when people courted imprisonment with Gandhiji's name on their lips. They are now selling *bidis* in his name! The transformation of raw materials into finished goods does not mean that evil should be presented in the garb of virtue. Was not Gandhiji himself a *vaishya*? He revived the *khadi* industry. Jamanalalji, also a trader, organized it. He breathed his last in the service of the cow. He exemplified by his life that commerce can be conducted without resorting to falsehood. But many merchants think otherwise. They are not unaware of the limitations of falsehood. But they consider its use to be necessary, like salt in food. They are no doubt liberal when they practise charity, but they believe that the law of commerce is different from that of charity.

"Gandhiji had got the controls removed. But the merchants failed him. Gandhiji died soon after. His death must have given the mercantile community some shock. But in course of time they forgot him altogether. There have been several occasions in the history of this country, when the merchants instead of joining hands with the country, looked to their own self-interest. They had considerably benefited from the *Swadeshi* movement, but every time they failed the country. They did not think of the good of the country. All their talents today are employed in discovering loopholes in the laws of the Government. There is, as it were, an intellectual tug of war betwen the Government and the merchants. The meeting together of the talents of the employers and the employees, instead of resulting in an addition becomes a subtraction. The country therefore does not get the sum total of their combined talents, but their difference instead. If the one is ten units and the other is eight, the resultant instead of being eighteen, is but two. This is all very tragic. The social order or *varna-vyavastha* can survive only if merchants adhere to their duties honestly. May I hope that you will give your serious thought to all this?"

This discourse was followed by questions and answers. One of the questioners wanted to know how an occasion could arise in the life of a trader for making a sacrifice similar to that of a soldier.

Vinoba: Commerce could not have been termed a duty if it did not give occasions for sacrifice. If it had been so, unlike the functions of the *brahman*, the *kshatriya* and the *shudra*, which have been described as their *dharmas* (duties), those of the *vaishya* would have been designated *adharmas* (sins or wicked deeds).

After the partition, Indian merchants, who took pride in calling themselves *sanatanis* (orthodox Hindus) and bore no particularly friendly feelings towards the Muslims, nevertheless traded with Pakistan in an illicit manner.

The situation of the country can be changed at once if businessmen realize that whatever business they carry on, they shall do it in the spirit of service to their country and not for their own sake. Let them realize as to who their ultimate master is. It is the *kisan*. And how can we grow richer than the master, who is himself reduced to beggary? And what is the condition of the moneyed class today? They are supposed to be men of rank and position, and placed in happy circumstances. They themselves are also under that illusion, but they have no peace. Their domestic life is not happy. The son is not on good terms with the father; the rich father fears even his own son!

Hindu *Dharma* calls विश: प्रजा: i.e. the masses are *vaishyas*. That is 97 per cent of the population should be *vaishyas*; because it is they who are engaged in agriculture, cattle-keeping and commerce. The number of the *shudras* should be the smallest. But it is quite the reverse today. The farmers are regarded *shudras*. It is wrong. They are *vaishyas* beyond doubt, because they are the producers. The *mukhia* (leader, literally the mouth) of the community should really be like the mouth, i.e. the vehicle of food and drink. The mouth keeps nothing for itself but passes on everything to the stomach. The stomach, too, does not keep what it receives to itself, but distributes it to the whole body. The *vaishya* — the stomach of the nation as he is so called — should follow this in his deals. This alone can raise the merchants to the position of the *mukhiya* (mouth) of society. A heavy responsibility rests on the shoulders of the *vaishyas*. They are designated *mahajans* (great men) and people follow their footsteps. महाजनो येन गत: स पन्था: ।। (the right way is that by which a great man goes). The *vaishyas* are described as पीतवर्ण (yellow-coloured), like the yellow garment of the Lord Vishnu. The colour is a symbol for sacrifice. Another injunction says, "Collect with a hundred hands, and distribute with a thousand ones." Whatever the *vaishya* takes from society he has to return it tenfold, and if he takes again, he again returns it after increasing it tenfold. That is commerce. That is the duty of the commercial community. There is only sacrifice and nothing but sacrifice in this. That is why Gandhiji asked the business community to become the trustees of their possessions.

D. M.

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HINDI *vs.* REGIONAL LANGUAGES

[In the last issue of the *Harijan* I had drawn attention to the advice of the Government of Bombay regarding the use of Hindi as the medium of higher education. It would be interesting to know what drove the Government to do this. Having established linguistically regional universities in the State and having left the question of the medium to these universities to decide, is it not springing a surprise on them to come out with such an anti-democratic suggestion? "It is universally admitted that as long as university education is imparted in a foreign language the ordinary level of popular education can never be raised." And for this purpose all languages but one's own are foreign, more or less. They may be allied ones, as Hindi and Gujarati are. But that only shows that Hindi as compared to English will be very well picked up by a Gujarati. That does not however, warrant us to take Hindi as the medium. But there are various other considerations — social, educational and cultural — that make us conclude that the regional and not the national language should be the medium of all education. These had been duly recognized by the Tarachand Committee of the Vice-Chancellors of the Indian Universities when they declared in 1947-48 that regional languages should be the media of higher education and Hindi should be compulsorily taught in colleges. And later on the whole question was thoroughly gone into by the Radhakrishnan Commission in their Report. Relevant portions from this weighty document are reproduced below:

16-8-'51 — M. P. Desai]

To choose the language of the Indian Federation (now the Union) is not tantamount to the solution of the problem of higher education. For no sooner is this problem settled, than a fresh crop of difficult problems arises. Granted that Hindi will be the Federal language of India, how will it affect the participation in the affairs of the Federation by those whose mother-tongue is different?.... Will it give to those whose mother-tongue is Hindi an undue advantage and a disproportionate influence in the affairs of the State? Will this arrangement deprive the Central Government of the valuable services of the intellectual elite of India irrespective of the regional and linguistic provenance?

Another set of questions which press for answer concern the relationship of the Federal language with the regional languages. What will be the languages of the provincial governments, provincial legislatures, provincial High Courts, the language of intercommunication between the Centre and the provinces? What will be the medium through which higher education will be imparted in the regions and the provinces? And in what language will be conducted the competitive examinations for Provincial and Central Services? In case Hindi is the language of the Central institutes of higher learning, science and technology, how would they maintain their all-India character in teachers and scholars?

We have to find a solution for the questions posed above which will satisfy the two requirements of federal unity and local variety. Through the federal language Indian solidarity must be secured and strengthened, but without sacrificing the educational and cultural advantages of the use of the mother-tongue at all stages of education.

If the matter is looked at in this way, the solution proposed by some that the Federal language should take the place of English and therefore should be recognized as the medium of higher education all over India and the language through which all administrative business should be transacted, has to be discarded; for Hindi does not enjoy in India such natural ascendancy over other provincial languages as to incline inhabitants of these provinces to accept a secondary position for their languages in their own regions.... Hindi is the language of the minority, although a large minority. Unfortunately it does not possess any advantages — literary or historical, over the other modern Indian languages.... In the circumstances, while national needs compel the recognition of Hindi (Hindustani) as India's Federal lauguage, it is difficult to assign to it the role played by English. What then shall be the language policy for all India? The Federal language will be used for all Federal activities — cultural, educational and administrative. The regional languages will occupy a similar position in the provinces and units of the Federation. But in order to enable every region and unit of India to take its proper share in the Federal activities and to promote inter-provincial understanding and solidarity, educated India has to make up its mind to be bilingual, and pupils at the higher-secondary and university stages will have to know three languages. Every boy and girl must obviously know the regional language, at the same time he or she should be acquainted with the Federal language, and should acquire the ability to read books in English.

We would like to see the introduction of the Federal language in all schools at the secondary stage and the teaching should be continued at the university. This will ensure a general knowledge of the Federal language of use for all practical needs. In addition, for those who desire to attain greater mastery over the Federal language, facilities should be provided for intensive study. In the Hindi-speaking regions it will be an advantage if students are required to learn another Indian language. This is proposed not merely to compensate for the efforts of students in other regions, but also to secure the eligibility of young men of one region to serve in other regions and to provide an adequate supply of those Hindi-speaking persons who can mediate between the provinces.

Higher education is the door through which some of the educated youth will pass into Federal services and Federal politics. But much the greater proportion will remain in the provinces. Both from the point of view of education and of general welfare of a democratic community it is essential that their study should be through the instrumentality of their regional language. Education in the regional language will not only be necessary for their provincial activities, it will enable them to enrich their literature and to develop their culture. Educated naturally in the regional language, they ought to achieve higher standards of learning and of thought, and should be able to give a powerful stimulus to research and extension of the boundaries of knowledge. Equipped with the requisite knowledge of the Federal language, the Provincial students will have no difficulty in joining institutes of an all-India character and the provincial scholars in undertaking to teach them.

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